

HOWARD

MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
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ESSAY CONTEST

Here's a chance to share your nature observations and perhaps win a modest prize. The Howard chapter is sponsoring an essay contest in which you describe an observation or experience you have had in some area of natural history (no limit to time or place but please no experiences with domestic animals). There will be two divisions: student (under 16) and adult. Winning essays may be published in the newsletter at a future time as space permits. Merchandise credit at the club book-store will be awarded. Winners will be announced at our annual February members' night. Rules are simple:

1. Entrants must be a member of the Howard chapter for the 1978-79 year.
2. Essays should be a maximum of 500 words.
3. Type or write clearly. Attach a 3 x 5 card or piece of paper with your name, telephone number, and whether adult or student (age if student).
4. Your method of presentation may be serious or humorous but emphasis should be on your observations.
5. Contest ends January 11, 1979 (date of the January meeting).
6. Give or mail entries to John Glegg or Jo Solem.
7. Judges will be appointed by the President.

QUESTION A - Editorial - Jo Solem

On November 7 the voters of Howard County will accept or reject Question A, the "Bottle Bill." Ideally, I favor countrywide deposit legislation, but since that is not likely to occur in the near future we obviously must work at another level to attack the problem of reducing litter and solid waste and saving energy. The Howard County law will require a deposit (mostly 5¢) whether the bottle is refillable or not. The deposit aspect means that even if you choose to throw your bottles along the highways they probably won't stay there long because individuals or groups will gather them to obtain the deposit. Those of us who for years have made a point of obtaining our beverages in returnable bottles have noted a steady decline in the variety and availability of such containers. (EPA estimates are that a nationwide return to refillables would save as much as 40 million barrels of oil a year or its equivalent.) It appears that we will have to start locally to convince our elected representatives that there is a nationwide need and desire for deposit bottle legislation. The local opponents tell us that they want statewide legislation and not a piecemeal county-by-county approach. This is indeed an exemplary attitude on the part of the bottlers, handlers, etc. which in every other state have spent heavily to prevent statewide deposit legislation from being adopted. I will look for their enthusiastic lobbying in Maryland for a statewide container law; strangely, for the past several years it has made no legislative headway. Everyone must vote as his conscience dictates. Mine bids me support Question A.

Each December counts are taken all over North America to determine the wintering bird population. Originally the counts were Christmas Day walks, but as the idea spread a period was set aside at the end of December and early January and uniform rules were adopted. The circles in which the counts are held are 15 miles in diameter and normally remain the same from year to year. A super-size volume of American Birds is devoted to a listing of all counts with species, numbers, and birders. Because of the publishing costs involved a fee of 1.50 is charged each participant. Some people are out from dawn to dark no matter what the weather while others choose to watch their feeders or walk their neighborhoods for a few hours. The Triadelphia Count which includes the southern and western part of Howard County will be held this year on ~~Saturday~~, ^{Sunday} December 24. The compiler is Danny Bystrak. If you are interested in participating or would like more information call him at the Patuxent Research Lab between 8:30 AM - 4:30 P.M., 776-4880. For the energetic the dates of some other Maryland counts are listed: Garrett as well as D.C. on Dec. 16; Seneca along with Catoctin Dec. 17; Bowie Dec. 30; Annapolis Dec. 31.

CALENDAR

PROGRAMS - Swansfield Elementary School 7:45 P.M.

NOV. 9 - Thur. - "Sparrow Identification" - David Holmes. If you thought all sparrows looked alike this talk should help you sort out the "little brown birds." David is an excellent field ornithologist. His close-up photos taken at banding stations as well as tapes of songs will help the beginner and advanced birder alike.

DEC. 14 - Thur. - "Birds of the Falkland Islands, South Georgia, and the Antarctic Peninsula" - Claudia Wilds. Claudia is the past president of the Montgomery Chapter and an excellent field observer. She will present slides of an expedition aimed specifically at bird study near the remote continent of Antarctica. She participated in the cruise in Dec. 1974 along with other prominent ornithologists including Roger T. Peterson and Olin S. Pettingill.

FIELD TRIPS - Meet at Swansfield Elementary School.

NOV. 5 - Sun. - HABITAT BIRDING, COLUMBIA LAKES. Learn what birds to expect in which habitats. Meet 8:00 A.M. Leader: Nan R. Hineland, 286-2427. $\frac{1}{2}$ day.

NOV. 18 - Sat. - GETTYSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK AND HANOVER RESERVOIR, PA. Combine history and birding in a family outing. All day so bring lunch. Meet at 7:30 A.M. Leaders: Chuck Dupree, 796-1086 & Jo Solem, 725-5037.

DEC. 2 - Sat. - NATIONAL ZOO. Family trip to see exotics indoors and waterfowl out. Bring lunch or purchase it at the zoo. May be an all day trip. Meet 9:00 A.M. Leader: Linda (Parfitt) McDaniel, 992-7124.

DEC. 10 - Sun. - FEEDER TRIP, COLUMBIA, WEST SIDE. Observation of birds at feeders from indoors and outdoors. Always a good trip for beginners as well as those who enjoy close looks at birds. Time 8:00 A.M. Leaders: Marty Chestem, 730-1527 & Marjorie Mountjoy, 730-5873.

DEC. 23 - ^{Sun.} Sat. - TRIADDELPHIA CHRISTMAS COUNT - see information at top of this page

BOARD MEETING - Nov. 30, 1978 - Thur. 7:30 P.M. - Sybil McKennon's, 5241-3 Brook Way, Columbia, Md. 21044. For directions call 730-2806.

MOUNTED BIRDS

The chapter has a modest collection of mounted birds which in the year that we have had them has been widely used. If you have an opportunity to speak within Howard County to a class at your local school, a Scout group, 4th Club, etc. about birds and you would like to borrow some of the specimens call Jo Solan, 725-5037 to arrange dates. We also have a box of easy-to-make feeders with several samples of bird seed. Nest collections of local birds are also available. This is one of the privileges of membership.

COASTAL NEW JERSEY RARE BIRD ALERT

With birders wandering far afield to see rarities of the season it might be useful to note that New Jersey Audubon has added a new bird alert which concentrates on those species sighted along the coast. If you're heading for Brigantine N. W. Refuge or Cape May call 201-766-2661 for the latest information.

BIRD PUDDING - Rosamond Munro

The following recipe seems to be particularly relished by cardinals, titmice, chickadees, and woodpeckers. If the recipe seems too large for your needs reduce it proportionately. It should be refrigerated and can be frozen so that you can make an ample supply and use it as needed.

4 cups of water	2 cups of old-fashioned rolled oats
Cook these together a few minutes, then add	
1 lb. lard	1 12 oz. jar of peanut butter
Cool this mixture and add	
3½ cups of rolled oats, raw	3½ cups Cream of Wheat, uncooked
3½ cups cornmeal	
You can also add raisins and/or nuts if desired.	
Put the mixture in small (4") aluminum pie tins. These can be hung by putting holes in the edges or they can be placed on a shelf feeder.	
Don't put the mix on the ground where it may attract animals.	

FIELD TRIP PLANNING MEETING

Any interested member is invited to meet with Linda McDaniel, the Field Trip Chairman on Thursday, November 16 to plan the trips for January through June. The meeting will be at 7:30 P.M. at 5651-D Harpers Farm Rd. Call 992-7124 if you need directions. If you can't make the meeting but would like to suggest trips you would be interested in or areas you are familiar with for bird, wild flower, or fern walks give Linda a call. If you feed birds during the winter and would like to volunteer your yard as a stop on a feeder trip she would also appreciate hearing from you.

BANDED GOLDFINCHES

As you watch the birds at your feeders check goldfinches for colored plastic leg bands. Note the leg on which the band was observed and the sequence of colors. Ex. left leg, blue over yellow, 11/2/68. At the end of the season send your list of sightings to Kathy Klimkiewicz, 13117 Larchdale Rd., #2, Laurel, Md. 20811. She will let you know the location and year the birds were banded.

BLUEBIRD BOX PLANS AVAILABLE

Winter is a good time to build bird boxes. The species most in need of your aid is the Eastern Bluebird. If you need a copy of Dr. Zeleny's plans with a description of habits and placement tips call Jo Solem 725-5037. The North American Bluebird Society is headquartered in this area. Chuck Dupree 796-1086 can provide you with information.

GENERAL ADVICE FOR FEEDING BIRDS

Late fall is the time to start feeding birds. This is a period when natural food supplies are still available, resident birds are setting up feeding patterns, and migrants are arriving for the winter. The collaborators on the booklet which this chapter is compiling listed some tips which may not become the Ten Commandments of Bird Feeding but they are worth considerable thought.

1. Start by getting a simple book on the subject.
2. Once you begin feeding during the fall or winter, continue until spring or do not start at all.
3. Keep fresh, clean water available.
4. Be patient if birds are slow to come to a new feeder. It may take several weeks for birds to find your yard if you've never fed them before. Spread some seed on the ground below the feeder so that it will be located more quickly.
5. Plant shrubs and trees for food, cover, and nesting.
6. Do not use insecticides.
7. Do not keep a cat. (Some successful feeder people own cats which stay in the house or are old and feeble. It is unfair to attract birds and then allow a cat to prey on them.)
8. Be aware of the expense involved!
9. Browse through catalogues of feeder supplies for ideas.
10. Be prepared to become hooked on a fascinating hobby.

Although the above list is not exhaustive, all of the suggestions have validity as you attempt to attract birds to your area. A final note was added by one of our enthusiastic feeder people who suggested, "Join a birding organization. A bird seen through binoculars and identified by a competent ornithologist is worth two in a field guide." Be sure to note the feeder trip listed in the calendar for Dec. 10 (Sun.) You can always pick up ideas from seeing how other individuals feed the birds.

HOLIDAYS ARE APPROACHING

The Club bookstore will be set up at both the November and December meetings. Special orders can be obtained by calling Louise Risse evenings, 997-2577.